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Nan-fang Jih-pao.

ALL-CHINA SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS TO AID ARMY-NAVY TRAINING AND PREPARATION FOR 1956 OLYMPIC GAMES

On 16 September 1952, the All-China Swimming Championship competitions were opened in Canton. According to late-September 1952 newspaper reports from Canton, the participants included contingents from the Chinese People's Liberation Army and Navy, champions from China's five major regions (North, Northwest, East, Central-South, and Southwest), and overseas Chinese from Indonesia. There were a total of 105 contestants. The competitions ended on 19 September 1952 with members of the People's Liberation Army and Navy taking top honors.

According to editorial comment, the reasons for holding the competitions were: (1) to improve the swimming ability of members of the People's Liberation Army and Navy, (2) to prepare for the second Pan-Asian Games in 1954 and the Olympic Games in 1956 for prestige purposes, and (3) to improve the physical strength of the workers and fighters of China for the tasks of construction and modernization of the People's Liberation Army.

On 17 September 1952, the Canton Nan-fang Jih-pao, organ of the CCP, carried the following editorial statement on the championship competitions:

"The national swimming movement, of which these championship competitions are a part, has a special utility with regard to war and national defense. The 1949 crossing-in-force of the Yangtze River by the People's Liberation Army and the 1950 battle for the liberation of Hainan Island demonstrated that soldiers and sailors well-trained in the art of swimming made major contributions toward ensuring victory in both crossings."

On 19 September 1952, the Canton Nan-fang Jih-pao carried the address of Chu Kuang, vice-chairman, 1952 All-China Swimming Championships Committee. Chu concluded his address with the following remarks:

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"In 1954, the second Pan-Asian games, and in 1956, the Olympic Games, will be held. For this reason, the athletes of China must display a high spirit of patriotism and internationalism, study diligently, train intensively, and elevate the level of their political and athletic capacities so that they will soon be able to win prestige for the fatherland in international competitions."

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